

COMRADES IN ARMS

Three Talks to Junior Officers
or Officer Cadets to assist
them in the handling
of their
men

JUNE, 1942

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All officers receive a copy of the booklet "Guide to Service—Officers" which gives the framework of three lectures which officers can use in instructing their junior officers or N.C.Os. in the subject of character training and discipline. This War Office booklet "Comrades in Arms" contains three talks to junior officers to assist them in another aspect of the subject, namely the handling of their men. This War Office booklet is being distributed to all Air Force officers without any alteration of the wording. The subject with which it deals is as vital for the well-being of the Royal Air Force as for the Army and the Navy. It is the duty of all officers to study this booklet and do their utmost to follow out the sound advice which it contains. It is only by fostering a strong bond of mutual respect and confidence between officers and airmen that the Royal Air Force will be able to give its best at all times, particularly under conditions of special emergency or strain.

September, 1942.

A. G. R. Garrod

Air Marshal

Air Member for Training.

(This slip to be affixed to the outside cover of the booklet "Comrades in Arms".)

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FOREWORD

The gist of these three talks has been given at a number of officers' schools and O.C.T.U.s. by an officer of wide practical experience in the subject about which he speaks.

They have now been printed in order to assist those officers whose duty it is to instruct young officers and cadets in the management and handling of men.

This is a subject which, though of the utmost importance for the fighting efficiency of the Army, presents considerable difficulty to the young officer when first commissioned, and actual experience in command of men is essential before it can be properly mastered.

This pamphlet is issued in order that the three talks can be given either verbatim as written, or be used as a guide by officers preparing their own notes for the giving of similar instruction.

The management and handling of men is much bound up with unit welfare—guidance on which is contained in "The Soldier's Welfare."

INTRODUCTION

I am going to give you three talks on the subject of your relationship with your men, and how to understand them and look after them. I have given these talks the title of "Comrades in Arms" because that is the way in which an officer should always think of himself and his men.

This is a very important subject, but it is not, of course, a subject all on its own in a little water-tight compartment, which can be attended to at certain times, and left alone at others. Your relationship with your men, and how you understand them and look after them, is just one of the four ways of attaining real efficiency in war—the others being training, discipline, and administration.

All four are completely interdependent, and equally important, and on them the morale and efficiency of a unit depends. If one link is weak, the others lose much of their effectiveness, and morale and efficiency suffer accordingly.

It is already obvious to you, I hope, that you cannot get the best fighting efficiency unless you have good training, proper administration, and sound discipline.

It is equally true that you will never get the best results from training, administration, or discipline unless the fourth link in the chain of command has been well forged, and kept bright and free from rust.

It is the purpose of these talks to show you how so to forge this link that you may get the best possible results, both from the other aspects of command that you will learn here and from the men whom it will soon be your privilege to lead in battle.

LECTURE No. 1

THE OFFICER AND MAN RELATIONSHIP

Right relationship important to morale

A right relationship between you and your men is most important for the morale of your unit. After the last war, the Germans realized that they had failed in this respect, and, in building up their new army, they copied largely from the British Army methods.

To judge from the comments of two Americans who have seen something of the German Army in this war, they have been highly successful. It should, however, be noted that both the writers left Germany before the start of the Russian campaign. Joseph Harsch in his book "Pattern of Conquest" speaks of the very high morale of the German Army, and attributes it largely to the fine relationship between officers and men. The German officers' relationship to their men is, according to Mr. Harsch, both paternal and comradely. And William Shirer says in his "Berlin Diary":—

"The great gulf between officers and men is gone in this war. There is a sort of equalitarianism. I felt it from the first day I came in contact with the Army at the front. The German officer no longer represents—or at least is no longer conscious of representing—a class or caste. All the men in the ranks feel this. They feel like members of one great family."

It would almost seem that it was perhaps the turn of the British army to do a bit of copying!

Nature of relationship

Before you start, however, to build up the right relationship between yourself and your men, you must, of course, know the kind of relationship you are aiming at. I should say that two things were essential, and several others desirable, where possible. The two essentials are mutual confidence and mutual respect—the men must have confidence in you, and you must have it in them, and you must respect each other.

But there is no earthly need for the relationship to stop there—in fact, it can't, unless you, as the officer, deliberately make it do so. And, if you do that, you are depriving yourself and your men of the very things that can bind you together most effectively. Between you and many of your men a real friendship is bound to grow, and sometimes there will be a little more than that. There is nothing sloppy or sentimental about such a relationship, nor should it be in any way bad for discipline. If you are a youngster, some of the older men will feel kind of paternal towards you and will want to look after you—and you, in your turn, will feel the same way towards some of your young soldiers. All perfectly natural and human, and excellent for morale.

And to some of your men, too, you will be a hero—whether you like the rôle or not—because most men in the ranks are natural hero worshippers, as you may have already learnt. They want, like most of us, the stimulus of a personal leader—someone whom they know and like

to look up to, and admire. Possibly they are more critical than they used to be—but not much. They really ask for very little from us, and it is certainly up to every officer to try and fill the bill of a hero as well as he can, and to do his best not to fail his men in this respect through slackness or unworthiness.

But that does not mean, of course, that you should be thinking of yourself as a hero all the time. I have only told you this because if you are going to lead men, you must understand what they expect and want of you. To you it should be your men who will be heroes, unless you are very unlucky with your unit, or very blind !

So much, then, for the relationship you have got to try to build up. Now I want to give you some practical suggestions about how to do it, with just two important reminders first of all.

1. No seeking of popularity or relaxing of discipline

There must be no seeking of popularity in all this, nor relaxing of discipline—both are fatal, and also quite unnecessary, because the carrying out of these suggestions in the right spirit will undoubtedly enable you to demand and get more from your men in every way without resort to either of these errors.

2. You must be efficient

You must be efficient at your job. Unless you are, the men will not be able to have confidence in you or to respect you, and, as I have already said, these are the two essentials of the officer-man relationship.

3. Now for the suggestions :—

i. Give them a sense of unity

Give your men a sense of unity with you by getting them to feel that you and they are part of the same show—which, of course, has got to be a good show, and something worth belonging to. You can do this in several ways.

(a) When you talk to your men say “we” and not “you,” wherever possible. If you are explaining a job of work to your platoon, say “This is what we’ve got to do,” and not “This is what you’ve got to do.”

And, too, when you’re passing on some rocket, say “The company commander says we’re a dirty platoon,” and not “The company commander says you are a dirty platoon.” Incidentally, it is usually quite fair, too, that you should take a part of the blame, because their faults must be partly your fault.

(b) Identify yourself with the men in every way you can, both in your mind and in your speech. Do not think of the men as a tribe apart. Although you are their leader, you are also a part of them. You can no more function without them than they can without you ; you are interdependent. They are to you “my men,” and not “the men,” just as you should be “our officer,” not “the officer” to them. You and they must see yourselves as a team all the time.

(c) Do not let men grouse about “the army” as if it was something they can criticize freely because it has nothing to do with them. It is far healthier for them that they should see themselves as part of the

army, and resent criticism of it, and should realize that they have a responsibility towards it. Certain sections of the Press have, unfortunately, rather encouraged soldiers to express criticism of the army, without probably realizing the harm they were doing. Of course, we all have plenty of grouses, but let's keep them in the family, so far as possible.

Be particularly careful not to air some pet grievance of your own in front of the men, and so start them off on a grouse of which they might never have thought but for your words.

ii. *Put the men's interests first.*

Put the men's interests and the men's welfare first, and let the men really feel that you are doing so.

Unfortunately, many men seem to get the impression that their officers think that "looking after the men" is rather a bore and a nuisance, and that the officers do it as rather an unpleasant duty, which they skimp if they can. Naturally, the men resent this attitude; it's not their fault that, uprooted by the war, they are in a new kind of life, which makes them dependent on the goodwill of their officers for many things. But it is the very fact that they are dependent on you that gives you your chance to show that you do care for them, and their welfare, more than for any of your own interests and pleasures, and that your care and interest is genuine, and not just something done as a duty. It does not take the private soldier long to spot the difference between the two things. Even in an ordinary every-day matter like going round meals, there is a heap of difference, obvious to the soldier's eye, between the "any complaints" brand of officer, and the genuine article who wants to know if everything is as good as possible, and who, if it is not, will not rest till he has done all he can to make it so. But don't fuss over them, of course; they dislike that.

iii. *Explain things to them*

Whenever possible, tell the men about things, and explain the reason for orders, and so on.


It is usual to do this on training—and very necessary, of course—if you want to get the men's full co-operation; but it is every bit as necessary in other matters, and far less often done. For instance, an order is issued forbidding leave for soldiers on certain days. It certainly will not be a popular order, but, if the reasons for it—and there always are good reasons—are explained at once, there will be very little discontent or grouching. British soldiers are really very reasonable beings. Tell them why a thing is necessary, and they will take it, and, what is more important, they will gain confidence in you, and in the army.

All irksome restrictions should always be explained at once to men—especially those to do with leave—and so should any matters affecting their pay.

iv. *Do things with them*

Do things with your men. Not just the nice things like playing games with them, though that is very important, but the unpleasant ones, too. Some of your men may, for instance, have to stay in camp at a weekend to do picket duty. There is no need, perhaps, for you to do this; you are free to go out and enjoy yourself if you want. But how much you will tighten the bond between you and them, and make them feel that you are *their* officer and that they are *your* men, if you do, nevertheless, stay

in with them, and share the restriction and, perhaps, arrange some game to help them pass the time. Or there is a job of digging for half your men to do in the rain—while the other half are on an indoor job. Which party shall you join? Don't hesitate a minute—off with your coat and take a spade and get wet with the diggers. It's worth it every time.

Another opportunity of sharing with your men is at meals on field training. Have your food from the same cooker, and share with them the same delays and the same inconveniences, though I do not mean that you should actually sit down with them. 

Occasions like these are the opportunities that a good officer seizes, and the others miss. To those who seize them, they bring rich dividends. Hardships shared together, as many of you must know already, create a bond of friendship and fellow-feeling and mutual understanding.

Opportunities and occasions are far more numerous on active service than "at home," of course, but even then it is always the spirit in which the little things are done that counts even more than the actual doing of them—and the men know.

v. *Be their champion*

Be your men's champion. They will probably need your protection most in the matter of fatigues, since there are always, as you know, a lot of people in search of victims for a little bit of extra work in off-parade hours!

See that your men do their fair share yet are not imposed on. At the same time let them understand that getting on with the job and doing it properly is far more important than bothering about whether they are doing more work than someone else. They must learn to trust you to see that they get fair play, and must not waste time bothering about the matter themselves.

There are many other little ways, too, in which you can let the men see that you are their champion. I heard of an example from a young officer quite recently. He told me that he had been put in charge of a rather difficult lot of middle-aged miners, with whom he did not seem able to do very much. They were very awkward at their drill, and none too willing, until one day he happened to order away a group of lads, who were standing by the edge of the parade ground and grinning at the miners' clumsy efforts. From that moment the attitude of the men towards him changed completely, and, with that change, the drill also improved. They seemed, he said, really to want to please him.

And I am quite sure that is exactly what the men did want to do. Men always appreciate an officer who takes their part, and respects their feelings.

vi. *Know their names*

Know your men's names. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this. The more the men feel that you are their leader, the more they will want you to know their names, and be hurt if you do not. If you have not got a good memory for faces, and cannot cultivate one, you may have to use all sorts of tricks and tact to hide the fact—but it will pay you to do so. Actually I believe that the officer who is really interested in his men personally will find very little difficulty in remembering their names: it's lack of interest, more than bad memory, that is usually the fault in my experience.

vii. Make the salute a greeting between comrades

Make the salute a greeting between comrades. Always return it properly and never in an off-hand manner. Be especially punctilious in this respect if a soldier is walking with his girl ; and, when off parade, add a "Good morning," or, better still, "Good morning, Jones." There is quite a lot you can do, just with a salute, to make a man feel that you are his comrade as well as his officer. It is as well to make sure that your men realize that the salute is a greeting between soldiers, who, in lifting their hand, raise the visor of their helmet so that they can be recognized as a friend. A lot of men have the wrong and harmful idea that they salute an officer to show that he is their superior—and not unnaturally they get a little tired of doing that at times.

viii. Be friendly without being familiar

Be friendly with the men without being familiar. That is a lot easier to say than to do, and I think that this is one of the hardest problems that a young officer has to solve. Just how far can he go with his men ? On the one hand, he must do nothing that will weaken his discipline with them, and, on the other, he must get near enough to them to give them that sense of unity with him, of which I've spoken, and to know their minds.

It is really an individual matter that all officers must solve for themselves : the answer depends on your personality, your experience, and the conditions of the moment. Some men have the gift of being able to be very friendly with their men without for a minute allowing any familiarity ; others just cannot do it, and so it's no use their trying, although experience will help them. They will have to work more through their N.C.Os. to know about their men, and, of course, that often does very well when the N.C.Os. are good.

And then there are times on active service when you will be living so close to your men that you will have to erect a few barriers in order to keep your position ; and other times, at home or in some base camp or on board ship, when you will have to make a real effort to get nearer your men by removing a few barriers. In fact, it all depends, as they say, and that's about all there is to say about this point !

The officer and N.C.O. relationship

Finally, I want to say a few words about your relationship with your N.C.Os., to which I referred a minute ago.

This matter is all-important. It is the N.C.O. directly under you, your serjeant or corporal, who matters most. He is the man who should not only see to the carrying out of your orders, and your wishes, but who acts as a kind of interpreter between you and the men. Being nearer the men than you, he both is able to tell the men about you, and to tell you about the men.

If he is good and loyal to you, his value is beyond price ; if he is bad, you must either alter him or get rid of him, because, so long as he is there, he will spoil all your efforts with the men, however hard you try. Of course, there are degrees of badness, and with the milder kind you may have to put up with for a time ; but there are three types of N.C.Os. who should never be allowed to retain their stripes, once you have found them out. I am afraid some still exist. They are :—

- i. The bully—particularly if he has a foul tongue.

- ii. The petty tyrant, who loves imposing restrictions to show his power.
- iii. The double-faced man, who is all show and shout when you are present, and is slack and familiar with the men behind your back.

Until you have got good N.C.Os. you cannot have a good unit.

When you have got them, give them your confidence and your support, and work things through them and with them in all you do. It is the only way—and it is the right one.

Conclusion

If you carry out those ideas I have given you, I am perfectly certain that you will get a fine response from your men.

It is tremendously important that we should get in the British Army the very best possible relationship between officers and men, when we remember some of the handicaps to morale under which we as officers are working, when compared with our enemies. In Germany, as you know, the German soldier is the important person ; he gets the best of everything and the civilian gets what he can after that ; and, of course, the same is even more true of the position of the German soldier in the occupied countries. It would be hardly an exaggeration to say that, except perhaps with regard to food, we are carrying out an almost opposite policy, and that whatever the rights or wrongs of the matter, it does make our task of building up morale far harder.

Nor are our men inspired with that fanatical spirit which carries the Nazis forward, and makes the Japanese think it glorious to die on the field of battle. I do not think that that fanatical spirit is part of the British make-up, so we must compensate for it in other ways if we are going to be—as we shall be—masters of our enemies.

And perhaps the most valuable way of all is to build up a relationship that will link officers and men together in a bond that will not only stand the hardest tests of war, but will be strengthened by them. My knowledge of, and faith in, the British character makes me absolutely sure that we have it in us to achieve this aim, and far better than our enemies can ever hope for, if we really try our hardest in the right way.

There is nothing, as our history has so often finely proved, that the British soldier will not dare and endure, when properly led.

LECTURE No. 2

UNDERSTANDING THE MEN

Part I.—The need for understanding and knowledge

It is essential that you should understand your men if you are going to command them properly, and look after their needs. It is, however, no easy matter, as I am sure you all realize, to understand the points of view and the needs of the many kinds of men whom you will command. For it requires a considerable amount of experience, imagination, sympathy, and knowledge, none of which is to be obtained for the asking, although your service in the ranks, if you have kept your ears and eyes open, will have given you a bit more of all those things, I hope, than you had before you joined up.

Further experience can only come with time, which can't be hurried.

Imagination and sympathy will, however, develop as you get to know more about your men—or they should do so, anyhow. Many an officer would, for instance, have more sympathy with his men's home troubles if he could visit their homes, as some officers manage to do, and see the background for himself. If he knew, too, about the men's upbringing, he would often again be more sympathetic and tolerant with their worries and their faults, though he should not on that account cease to demand from them the highest possible standard. And, more important still, not only would he sympathize more, he would also learn to respect and admire. Anyway, that has been my personal experience.

I am going, therefore, to deal later on in this talk with the ways in which an officer can improve his knowledge ; but first I want to give you some suggestions that you will, I think, find helpful in this important task of understanding your men.

Physical needs

Physical needs are, of course, comparatively easy to understand, but, even there, mistakes are quite easily made. For instance, as some of you may remember, the N.A.A.F.I. started the war with the firm idea that soldiers liked herrings in tomato sauce, and bought thousands and thousands of tins ; in actual fact, the exact opposite is the truth, or at any rate was then ; the soldiers disliked very strongly " herrings in blood," with the result that much valuable food and money were wasted.

And to give another example. There was a camp for unemployed men in Durham which some Cambridge undergraduates offered to run on their own ; it was nearly a complete fiasco because of a misunderstanding on the food question. The undergraduates, wanting to do the miners well, spent their money lavishly on delicacies like tinned asparagus, tinned lobster, breakfast cereals, etc. ; while the miner, equally anxious to do himself well after a long spell of poor food on the " dole," came to the camp hungry for good things to eat, which to his way of thinking were heavy meat dishes, and even heavier puddings. He was not at all attracted to the Cambridge fare offered him, and felt very aggrieved ; while, on the other side, the undergraduates felt equally sore at the way in which the miners rejected their well-meant hospitality. Just a question of not getting down to understanding physical needs—that is all. But it nearly ruined the success of that camp, all the same.

Still, as I said, physical needs are fairly easy to understand with a little bit of thought and trouble. It is the mental and emotional needs that are more complicated and difficult for officers to understand, since the men in the ranks come not only from a very different background but, more often than not, from so many different backgrounds !

It is obvious, therefore, that you cannot treat a group of men all in the same way, and hope to get the best results, and that it will, therefore, pay you, and is part of your job, to study these differences.

Six reasons why men differ

I believe there are six main reasons why men differ from one another—on account of their locality (i.e. where they come from), their job, their temperament, their religion, their upbringing, and their politics, and I am going to talk a bit about each of these six differences.

i. Their locality

Town and country—North and South—Welsh and Scots—they have different customs, different ways of thought and speech, different humour, and, as we have already seen, different kinds of food.

I expect you know many instances of these differences. There was in my own experience the Tyneside lad who had been transferred down to the south to get a job. When asked how he was getting on, he said that the thing that worried him most was the fact that he could never enjoy his meals ; the reason being that, on Tyneside, they took off their coats, and very often their collars, when they wanted to enjoy a good meal ; whereas down in the smug south they stayed all fastened up, and never gave themselves a real chance to put a proper meal down or ply a good knife and fork. If only his hosts had known that custom, I'm sure they would gladly have undressed to put him at his ease.

That is a difference of custom, but cultures vary every bit as much.

Some very good examples came to light at the time of all the bad unemployment in the Durham and Welsh coalfields, when great efforts were made to keep the unemployed men active.

Give a Durham man a hut to build, or a slag heap to remove, and he was, we found, on the job ; but ask him to do things in that hut, when he had completed it, in the way of drama, or discussions, and he was not half so keen. The Welshman, on the other hand, was not always so keen on the hard work ; but, once the hut was built he was as happy as a king, acting and singing and discussing in it ; so if you have a mixture of Durham men and Welshmen in your platoon or company, you will need two different programmes to keep them happy in their spare time.

And lastly, of course, there are all the different kinds of humour—the self-pitying, heroic jesting of the Cockney, the friendly humour of the West, the broad Lancashire humour of Gracie Fields and Stanley Holloway—and who but a Lancashire comedian could succeed in making delightful fun out of the sad fate of a small boy in the Zoo ? Scottish jokes—or the lack of them, and so on. By studying the kind of humour that appeals to your men, you will learn a lot about them, and you will also, with luck, get to know the kind of crack that they will enjoy. The officer who can make a good joke is always much appreciated by his men.

ii. Their jobs

I believe a man's job to be more important in moulding his character than his locality, though in a way the two go together, since you so often find the same jobs in the same kind of locality.

When I was a subaltern, I remember being told to make a list of my men's names, and to put down against them what they did ; but when I had written down that one was a miner, and the other a clerk, or a factory hand, I had not much more idea about their characters than before. I did not know anything about miners and very little about factory hands, and no one told me, so my list was not much help to me in understanding them.

I have no time to go into the matter here at any length, but I will just take a few examples of what I am getting at.

There is the miner—a man who is by nature of his daily life accustomed to danger and hard manual work ; a conservative in his habits and his thoughts, because he lives for the most part in communities that have little contact with the rest of the world ; a strong Labour man in politics, hostile by tradition to the officer class, and yet a man who, once **you have won his loyalty**, will never let you down, because loyalty to a

leader, come what may, is in the miner's blood and in his history and upbringing.

That is a rough general picture of the man, and when you have got those points about him in your mind, you should have some idea how to lead him and get the best out of him.

And, as an opposite, we might, perhaps, take the Cockney clerk who will, likely as not, stand next in the ranks of your unit to the miner. Everything about him is different. Crossing by a Belisha beacon may well be the greatest danger he had faced before the air raids altered all that; but even now he is not accustomed to danger as a part of life in the way the miner or seaman is. He is a friendly, cheerful person, untrained to physical hardship, and without, as a rule, any habit of loyalty to a leader, or any very definite political views. A less stable character in some ways, if I may venture to say so, but a much easier one to know and to make friends with quickly.

Then there is the factory hand, whose job often dulls all his initiative while giving him the useful habits of patience and steady endurance; and lastly, to complete my examples, there is the docker, whose work demands from him a body which must stand up to long spells of hard physical labour done against time, and whose industrial conditions in the past have helped to make him a bit awkward to handle.

It is all a fascinating study. If ever you have the time to read a little industrial and Trade Union history, you will find that it will help you a lot to understand the attitude of different types of workmen to those in authority over them.

iii. *Their temperament*

In every body of men there will be the sulky, the good humoured, the touchy, the lazy, the hard-working, the amorous, the loyal, the grumbling, the shy, and all the other diversities of which human nature is capable. The officer who knows each man well as an individual will be able to get the best out of him and vice versa.

Some men like being joked with, and can enjoy a joke against themselves; others, as you know, are touchy and cannot be joked with at all.

Again, there is the hard-working fellow who is always all out to do his very best; and there is the other fellow who never starts to work until he has had two or three prods to get him going. Well, if you prod the fellow who is working his hardest already, he will not like it, and it will upset him.

And there is the grumbler who is always grumbling, and the other fellow who never grumbles unless there really is something worth grumbling about. The former, if you know him, won't get any attention from you, while the other will be worth listening to when he has a grumble to make.

iv. *Their religion*

The fact that the majority of the men in the ranks today do not appear to have any strong religious views, or to be interested in religious observances, must not blind you to the fact that there are plenty of men scattered through the army to whom their religion matters a great deal. Such men should be treated by you with every respect and consideration, although, at times, their observances may seem to you—and more particularly to your N.C.Os.—to be a bit of a nuisance.

They will usually have in their kit bag, so to speak, something that will stand them in good stead when things are bad, and at such times

they will be a help and strength to those round them. Religious faith is a valuable aid to morale. It is, perhaps, one of our greatest tragedies today that we have not got more of it, so let us make the very most of the leavening that we have.

v. *Their upbringing*

I think that it is pretty obvious that the kind of upbringing a man has had—good home, bad home, etc.—makes a great difference to the way he sees things and behaves.

vi. *Their politics*

At the beginning of the war, when the men called up were all young, this question of politics was not important ; nearly all of them were far too young to have any special political leaning. But now it is a different matter. The army is getting older men who have been possibly keen trade unionists with strong political views as well ; very often they will come into the army suspicious and resentful of those in authority, and it will be necessary to understand their point of view and to make the necessary allowances.

Lead them like an orchestra

Those are, I think, the main ways in which men differ from one another, and the more an officer understands these differences, the better he will lead his men. I think that officers should try to lead like the conductor of an orchestra. A good conductor knows every instrument and every player in that orchestra, and from each player, and each instrument, he will draw the very best individually, and at the same time he will get them to play in harmony together. If that conductor goes sick, and someone else takes his place in a hurry, the same players and the same orchestra will be there ; but a very different and far inferior tune will be played—perhaps hardly a tune at all.

You will find the same situation in the army. One subaltern will make a mess of a platoon, and another will do wonders with it. With highly trained men there should not be this disparity, since the men should be less dependent on their leader, if properly trained.

Two more points before I pass on.

i. *Men in the ranks see things differently from the officers*

Don't forget that men in the ranks see things very differently from the officers. No matter what the man's education and class is, his point of view will, while in the ranks, nearly always be closer in many things to the point of view of the men in the barrack room or tent with him than it will be to the officer's point of view.

For instance, I expect most of you go back from a tactical course full of ideas about tactical schemes and, possibly, night operations, which you will want to try out with your units. Well, just remember that those schemes and night operations look a bit different through the eyes of the soldier who is carrying them out. And the same with the clean barrack room ; to the officer inspecting it, and to the man cleaning it, there is a world of difference from the point of view of the importance of that **cleanliness** ! A small point, perhaps, but one important to keep in mind.

ii. *Make the best of your material*

You are sure to get some queer-looking fellows to command at times. They may, at first sight—and at second sight, too—seem fairly hopeless material.

Perhaps your platoon serjeant will tell you that so and so is quite useless, and perhaps he will be quite right. If so, the sooner the man is out of the army the better, if that is possible. It very often is not. But do not be in a hurry to condemn a man as useless. Very few men really are, and it is extraordinary what good understanding and leadership can do with a man, and what fine qualities often lie hidden under unlikely exteriors.

Remember, too, that we all respond to what people think of us to a certain extent : think well of a man, and you help him to improve ; think ill of him, and you make him worse.

If you ever get what seem to you a poor lot of men, remember what the good card player does with a poor hand of cards. He makes the best of them, and plays them so well, that his small cards almost become aces. You can do the same with men if you try—and it's easier, because men can be changed, and cards can't—or, anyhow, are not supposed to be !

Part II.—Ways of getting knowledge and understanding

I have given some idea of the kind of knowledge that an officer ought to have about his men, but it is not very easy, unfortunately, to get that knowledge. We are not born with a knowledge of how others think and feel, and our class system, and educational and housing conditions, make it very difficult for us to find out. Many in fact never do ; but if an officer is to be of any use he must find out, and there are many ways open to him if he will take them. Here are some :—

i. *Company and platoon mess meetings, sports meetings, etc.*

Opportunities to meet the men informally should be taken advantage of, as these meetings give the officer a chance of seeing his men as natural human beings—talking about their food or their games. They serve other good purposes, too, of course, and should be held regularly and kept fairly informal.

ii. *Informal chats—off parade, on route marches, in hospital, etc.*

The object of these talks is to get to know about your men in a friendly way—about their homes and families, their interests in civil life, and so on. Some officers, I believe, take the view that it is prying into a man's private affairs to ask them questions of that sort and that men resent it, but I am quite certain that they are nearly always wrong in that view. I have yet to meet the soldier who is not only too glad to take out his wallet and show the photograph of his wife and family, or his girl, to his officer, if that officer has shown that he is a kindly person who will be interested to see them. And do not let the telling be all on one side. Tell them a bit about yourself and your family, too ; in fact, make yourself a real human being to them, with interests and feelings that they can share and sympathize in.

(a) *Find points of contact*

It is an officer's duty to find points of contact with his men, as he cannot expect the majority of them to find points of contact with him ;

the man's home town, his football team, the show on at the local pictures, the man's job in civil life, and, as I have said, his family, are all human interests which give plenty of scope for friendly chats.

Not that I want to suggest that all the men in the ranks have such simple and limited interests, though I think it is fair to say that it is true of a great many who, through leaving school at fourteen, have had little opportunity or encouragement to develop wider interests. Nevertheless, it is amazing how many diverse interests you will find in a group of working men, when you have had the time to get to know them well. One will be an expert pigeon fancier, another an authority on swing music, a third a skilled chess player, and so on, until you will wonder why you were ever such a fool to think of your men as dull, if ever you did so !

(b) The well-educated few.

But more important to keep in mind are the well educated few, who have an influence in the ranks out of all proportion to their numbers. That respect for book learning, despite what some people say, is still very strong amongst the less educated. These few will often be better educated than their officers, with wider interests and more culture, and they will often, too, be men with a bit of a grievance, perhaps because they have not been recommended for a commission, or because they feel they are square pegs in round holes. The officer who shows his awareness and appreciation of their better education, both by the way he talks to them and by the way he employs them, will turn potential rebels into loyal and very useful soldiers.

One of the very real advantages of these talks is that, once you know a bit about the men, it becomes so much easier to pass a casual friendly remark to a man at some odd moment. You can't very well ask "How's the baby" or "Is the wife getting on all right" until you know who has a baby, and a wife, and who has not. And yet questions like this often give a man just the opportunity to tell you of some worry that might never have come out, but for the chance you gave him, especially if he is one of those who don't like coming to see you for a private interview about his troubles, however informal you may make these interviews.

(c) Experience helps

Some officers are very stuck when they first try these informal talks, and cannot find anything to talk about. They feel awkward, and sometimes say the wrong thing—like the public school boy who a few years ago gave up part of his holiday in Scotland to come down and help a big London East End Club. When he got to the Club he felt very shy and out of it, but, at last, seeing a boy standing on his own, he plucked up courage to go up and open conversation. He could not think what to say, but at last ventured the remark, "Birds are scarce this year, aren't they?" in complete ignorance that "birds," to the East End boy, had a quite different meaning from what they had to him. However, it turned out in this case to be quite a good opening, and conversation flowed after that—though on somewhat unexpected lines !

Experience is the only cure for this difficulty, though I know that some officers never find it easy to do, however hard they try.

iii. Discussions

The alternate weekly issue of "Current Affairs" and "War" is another opportunity, and a splendid one, for officers to get to know their

men if the talk is really conducted informally and not like a lecture. It also gives the officer an opportunity to allow his men to tell him that he is quite wrong, and that is healthy for both sides.

But there is no need to limit the discussions you have with your men to the subjects dealt with in "Current Affairs." It is a good thing to watch the popular press, and when some subject of particular interest to the men is getting a good deal of publicity—"spit and polish" or "family allowances," for example—have a discussion on it with them. A good "free for all" exchange of views all round is a splendid way of getting to know each other's mind and temperament.

iv. *"Off the record" talks*

The idea of these talks is to give the men an occasional chance to ventilate any little grievances they may have about administration or welfare in the unit, without having to go through all the business of an official complaint, which they are often unwilling to make.

It is not always too easy for men to get little things brought to notice and put right; and yet, little things, if they fester, can become quite big and serious in time, so that these "off the record" talks can be made to serve a very valuable purpose.

It is very probable that your serjeant may not care for these talks too much, if some of the things the men say reflect a bit on his administration; but as the remarks will very probably reflect on your own as well, you will be able to show him how to take criticism in the right spirit. You must watch, too, that he does not "have a down" on the men who speak up, or that will kill the whole thing.

My experience is that the men greatly appreciate this opportunity, and rarely, if ever, abuse it; and, if they do, there should be no difficulty in dealing with the matter.

v. *Reading books*

As there is not time now for officers to pay visits to the coalfields, the pottery towns, and all the other various industrial parts of the country from which their men largely come, and which are more foreign than many foreign countries to the great majority of officers, one of the best remedies is for them to read in books about these places, and the people who belong to them. I, personally, have found some of these books of the greatest help to me in understanding men.

vi. *Psychology*

A general knowledge of psychology is of real use in enabling an officer to understand and help his difficult men. I don't mean that he should try and psycho-analyse them—heaven forbid! If he had the time—which he has not—he would be pretty certain to get the result all wrong.

What I do mean is that if the officer understands—and lets the offender see that he does—that there is a reason behind the actions of the thief, or the liar, or the coward, or the frequent absentee, he will very often be able to help such men to overcome these faults.

On the other hand, if he just judges them in his mind by what they have done wrong, and shows no appreciation of the environment and past history which may have caused the man's failing, then most surely he will be unable to help the man to improve; and, as I have already said, that will not do, since we have got to make the best of our men and help them to get rid of their faults, whatever they may be. A knowledge of psychology will also help you to deal with men's private worries

and troubles. The Germans use highly trained psychologists on a very large scale for this purpose, and we are doing so more and more.

As I have quoted the Germans once or twice favourably, it may amuse you to hear that they are not always successful in this aspect of their work. After the last war, they made a very deliberate and determined effort to cultivate a British sense of humour, as they realized that it was one of the great strengths of our nation in times of adversity. They, for instance, published many of Bruce Bairnsfather's cartoons of the last war, with detailed explanations of each joke, but it was all no good. Some years ago, they officially abandoned the attempt !

Conclusion

I think that I have said enough in this talk to show you that this matter of understanding your men is a big subject, and that Solomon gave crowning proof of his famous wisdom when he asked for an understanding heart, in preference to any other gift from God.

LECTURE No. 3

LOOKING AFTER THE MEN'S WELFARE

This talk is based on "The Soldier's Welfare"—a book of which all officers should have a copy.

It is a book that is meant to be read and used and kept handy for reference, and if copies are lost owing to moves, etc.—which is bound to happen at times—they can be replaced. So ask your adjutant to indent for more, if you lose yours and there is none left in the orderly room.

I am going to start by giving the answers to some of the questions which I am often asked about welfare, in order that you may be clear in your own minds on the subject.

i. *What do you mean by the term "The soldier's welfare" ?*

I mean the soldier's needs as a human being—his physical, mental, and emotional needs. Don't think of welfare as just a matter of football and food, or canteens and concerts : it is concerned with those things, of course, but with a great deal more than those two—family problems, education, religion, leave, and mails, to mention just a few.

It is the job of welfare to try to provide for those needs—with the soldier's own active co-operation, where possible, of course. It's most important that the soldier should do all he can for himself in this matter, and should be encouraged to do so.

ii. *What's the real object of welfare ?*

The main object of welfare is to keep the men as happy and contented as possible, so that they may be at all times fighting fit and fit to fight.

It is just as important to keep a man's mind fit and alert as his body, and he must also be happy in his mind if he is going to be 100 per cent. efficient.

iii. *Does not welfare make the men rather soft and sap their self reliance ?*

Welfare should not do anything of the kind.

"Looking after the men's welfare" does not mean pampering or mollycoddling them and so sapping their self-reliance and making them

soft ; that is not the idea of it at all. Necessary hardships are no concern of welfare, nor do they worry the men very much, as a rule ; but needless boredom, and unnecessary inconvenience and restrictions, definitely are to do with welfare because they are bad for morale. For instance, morale was always very high in Tobruk because the men knew that their hardships could not be helped and were all part of the job of winning the war, and so put up with them with the cheerful courage of good soldiers. And it's just the same in Malta to-day.

On the other hand, morale is not always as good as it might be in places where conditions are far better in every way than they were in Tobruk, because the men often feel, or know, that lack of understanding, or laziness, or, worse still, a love of making restrictions on the part of their officers or N.C.Os. are making things far more difficult for them than is really necessary—and they quite naturally and rightly feel resentful.

And the best answer, of course, to the criticism that welfare saps self-reliance is the old soldier's maxim that "any fool can be uncomfortable when he has got to be, but only a fool is uncomfortable when there is no need to be."

iv. *Is not welfare rather bad for discipline ?*

Certainly not. Strict discipline and good welfare can and should go hand-in-hand, but slack discipline is in itself bad welfare.

v. *Can't the padre and the local welfare officer look after the men's welfare all right ? Must the regimental officer, who has got so much to do already, bother about it, too ?*

The men's welfare must always be the direct concern of the regimental officer. Otherwise he does not command them in any real sense, nor will he get to know them, and build up that essential relationship of mutual confidence and respect. The padre and the local welfare officer are available to help him to do the job better, but not to relieve him of it.

vi. *Is there time for welfare work when one is in the thick of things on active service ?*

No officer can ever afford to neglect at any time the welfare of his men, whether it is during periods of inactivity or in actual fighting. If he does, the morale and fighting efficiency of his men is certain to suffer.

I hope that you know now just what welfare is and is not, and why it is very much your job !

The two aspects of welfare

Welfare divides into two parts which overlap to a certain extent : the Army Welfare Organization and Unit Welfare. This talk is almost entirely concerned with Unit Welfare.

Army welfare organization

The army welfare organization is under the direction of the War Office. A full account of how it works is in Part IV of "The Soldier's Welfare," and from that you will see that it is concerned mainly, though not entirely, with things outside the unit — hostels, canteens, cinemas, air raid enquiry scheme, problems of soldiers' wives, etc.

Local welfare officers

There are local welfare officers throughout the whole country, available to give help to units and to soldiers and their families. They are voluntary and unpaid people, and are therefore not at the beck and call of units at any moment as some seem to think ; on the other hand, these officers are most anxious to help and to co-operate, and not all units seem to make the use of them that they should.

There is a list of things they can do for a unit in "The Soldier's Welfare" pamphlet—such as organizing hospitality in the district, arranging for the loan of cricket or football grounds, or for ladies to help with mending clothes, fixing up hot baths in private houses, distributing magazines, helping to deal with men's private problems, and so on. But—and a most important point, this—please do remember that it is your job to get in touch with them, since they cannot be kept informed of local moves. You can always get the local welfare officer's address through the office of the local County Territorial Army Association, the number and address of which will be in the telephone directory, and, when you are moving, be sure and leave the address of the local welfare officer for your successor.

That is all I have time to say about the Army Welfare Organization in this talk.

Unit welfare

Welfare in the unit is far and away the most important part of welfare.

As I have said, the two things overlap, and that is quite right ; but I want to make it clear again that the Army Welfare Directorate with its local welfare officers does not exist to do the job of unit officers, but to assist them in their work and to do some things outside the unit that they cannot do.

Importance of small things

It is very well worth remembering that the small things, which so often get neglected or hurried over, because there seems to be no time, are often the very things that matter most. This is as true of welfare as of anything else. Often the small hardships are more irritating than the big ones, and small neglects spoil big success. For example, it is a pity to organize a splendid concert or boxing show for your men, and then forget to have the canteen open for half an hour afterwards, so that they have to go to bed without any supper ; and we all know the value of a cup of hot tea, a kind word, or a small joke at the right moment, and the nuisance of finding no paper in the latrine !

Points regarding the soldier's welfare

i. Leave

Regular leave is probably the best thing both for morals and morale, and so do give it your very special attention, and see that all those little points about letting the men get away in time, not having their passes delayed, and so on, are carried out.

Generally speaking there is, I think, very little grouse on this subject "at home," or at places overseas where regular leave can be given. Such complaints as there are seem to come nearly always from men who have been transferred from one unit to another, and not given their proper place on the new unit's roster. It is a sore point—and one that, therefore, wants very careful watching by officers.

Take care to explain carefully to your men any new regulations about leave, and, if they are restrictive, see that you tell them clearly the reasons. Make sure, too, that men know how to obtain compassionate leave, since much "absence" results solely because men take it without asking for it.

ii. *Messing*

Be always on the look-out for ways of improving and changing things. It is extraordinary how as one goes round from unit to unit one sees the differences : same rations all the time, but messing first class in one place, and indifferent in another ; and for no reason except that in the first place the officer cares, and knows his job, and in the latter place he presumably does neither.

iii. *Letters and false rumours*

One cannot emphasize too much the importance of mails in keeping up men's spirits ; although, of course, they unfortunately do at times have the opposite effect. In fact, this unfortunate effect is such a serious matter that I am sure every officer should warn his men against believing gossip or rumour about their wives, or girls, which some "kind" friend sends them, and even against reading some wrong meaning into what their wives write.

Apart from this, your most important job with regard to letters is to see that they are properly delivered to the men personally, and re-directed correctly at once to any men who are away from the unit. Again, when censorship of letters is ordered, make clear to your men the reasons, and stress the point that the contents of the letters are never disclosed by or discussed between officers.

iv. *Interviews about private affairs*

This aspect of welfare is, perhaps, the most important of all and, judging from the letters the Welfare Directorate so often gets, it is just where officers seem to be failing a little. The men must feel that they can come and talk to their officers naturally about their private difficulties, and must know that when they do so they will get sympathetic hearing. The most important points in this business are the following :—

(a) *A fixed time*

Have a fixed time for seeing men, and make sure that the men know about it and the procedure. If possible, don't use the orderly room or company office for these interviews. I think you will agree with me that you must do this at least twice a week—after an air raid on your men's towns it may have to be more—and that it is no use just giving yourself half an hour for the job. It takes some men at least that time to get to the point of the story—and then there is a lot more to come !

(b) *Procedure informal*

Let the procedure be quite informal, and see the man privately without the serjeant-major or serjeant being present. Try and put him at his ease as much as possible, and let him sit down and smoke a cigarette if that will help. If a man is in real trouble with his wife, it does not come easy very often to tell his officer about it, and yet if he cannot get help and advice, it is not likely he is going to be a fully efficient soldier with his trouble weighing on his mind.

(c) *Co-operate with the padre*

Make full use of the padre, whose parochial experience will usually enable him to be of great help.

(d) *The Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association*

The S.S.A.F.A. has secretaries and trained visitors in all parts of the country who do splendid work. They are always ready to visit soldiers' families at your request, and to give financial help, where necessary, and advice.

If you don't know the address of the local secretary, send your letter through their London Office at 23, Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, S.W.1.

(e) *The Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Incorporated Help Society*

The S.S.A.H.S. Head Office at 122, Brompton Road, London, S.W.3, are always most willing to help soldiers, but not their families. They also have representatives throughout the country, and work in close touch with the S.S.A.F.A.

(f) *Citizens' Advice Bureaux*

Many towns have Citizen Advice Bureaux.

Their secretaries are a mine of information on many of the soldiers' civilian problems, and should be made full use of.

(g) *Local welfare officers*

Local welfare officers can always be asked to help, and their services are specially useful in dealing with evictions from homes, and matrimonial disputes.

(h) *Value of sympathy*

If you cannot give practical help, remember that it often helps a man to get things off his chest, and just to tell the whole tale into a sympathetic ear. It will take time, of course, but it is not time wasted, believe me.

In listening to their troubles you will learn much, share some sorrows, and have not a little humour as well.

I remember, for example, the lance-corporal who came to me and told me that he was very worried because his wife had fallen off a tram and hurt herself. I asked him if I could do anything, but he said, "No": he just wanted to tell me about it, and that made him feel better; so much better, in fact, that when I saw him later, the same evening, he was thoroughly enjoying himself at an all ranks dance! Quite sensible and sound: he could not do anything about it, but he wanted somebody to tell him so before he felt justified in enjoying himself and getting the matter off his mind.

(i) *See each man occasionally*

In addition to seeing men who pluck up the courage to come and see you—and for most men it is a bit of an ordeal, however pleasant and accessible you may think you make yourself—you should try to see the others, who will not come near you on their own account, for a private talk at least once a month. To do so will never be a waste of time. If you have got the right kind of relationship with your men, they will appreciate that little personal notice, which shows you are interested in them and know of their existence; and, very often, your sending for them and saying a kindly word will

just give them the opportunity to tell you about some trouble that has been on their mind for ages. Just because some men always seem to be worrying you with their troubles, do not think that they are all like that ; many, and usually the best, are very shy and reluctant to bother you with their worries. They think the officer will not understand, or that they ought not to trouble him. You must make the opportunity to show them that you can understand, and that their troubles are yours. Only by so doing can you be quite sure that none of your men are being inefficient soldiers through private worries that could be relieved through your efforts.

v. *Talking to the men*

This is an important matter, and it is easy to put a foot wrong if an officer does not know his men and how they are thinking. It does not help, for instance, if you make the mistake of a young subaltern of whom I heard recently. He had been told that he had got to get his men to do a job of digging on a Sunday, instead of letting them have the half-day off as they had expected. Quite rightly he got them together, explained the reason, and then put his foot right in it by reminding them that munition workers often had to work Sundays, and, therefore, it was only right soldiers should do the same. The little matter of the extra pay munition workers get, but soldiers don't, had escaped his notice, but not his men's, with whom, as every officer should know, it is quite naturally a sore point.

There is some good advice about how to talk in "The Soldier's Welfare," and the only three points there that I want to emphasize now are :—

- (a) the importance of giving men encouragement as well as blame ;
- (b) the value of a cheerful word and a joke when you are talking. Men do like a cheery officer, and it is not much to ask of us that we should smile. I think that we do often forget to do so when we are with our men, and they hate "dismal Jimmies" more than anything.
- (c) Avoid sarcasm.

If you have time to listen to John Hilton on the wireless (every Tuesday at 5.45 p.m., on the Forces Programme), you will learn quite a lot. He is one of the few speakers to whom the men really do listen, as he has the gift of speaking to them in the way they like—straight to the point about things that interest them, with a joke or a funny story here and there, and just a few words, not more, of uplift or encouragement at the end : that, I think, is the ideal recipe when talking to men. Do not forget those few words of moral appeal. Most of us feel very shy and awkward about them, I know, and are very bad at the job, but all human beings need these appeals to their higher feelings at times ; soldiers, being quite ordinary human beings, certainly do. Far better your few, halting words which they know to be sincere, than nothing at all, or the cheap eloquence of a man like Horatio Bottomley—"The Soldier's Friend and Orator"—in the last war.

vi. *Sex behaviour*

This is, of course, a difficult subject, and for that reason many officers are, I fear, inclined to ignore it altogether ; but it is far too important a matter for that. Quite apart from the health and venereal disease aspect, there is all the unhappiness and misery which is caused by irregular sex

behaviour. I am sure that there cannot be an officer who has not seen some instances of it. So the subject must be faced up to, and not left till too late.

The best contribution that an officer can make is, undoubtedly, by setting a good example of conduct himself. Some officers—the older married ones in particular, perhaps—may feel able to supplement example by precept, and to give their men, especially the younger ones, a helpful talk occasionally. It is all to the good if you can do it, but I know that this is a job that many officers very understandably hate doing and honestly feel that they have no right to do. If you do talk to your men on this subject, you should tackle the subject constructively, and remember that merely negative sex advice, with the emphasis on the evils of promiscuity, will cut very little ice with most young men, and will very likely do more harm than good.

You should stress the value of a happy family life, which is something nearly all men want and understand about, and the need for loyalty and self-control if it is to be achieved, and you can contrast the Christian with the Nazi conception of womanhood, pointing out that a proper respect for women is one of those human values for which we are fighting. It might be useful, too, to refer to the Soviet Union's reversion to the traditional ideas of family life after the experiments of the revolutionary period. I can say from the experience I have had that, if the talk is given in the right spirit, and is not in any way a talk down to the men, they will appreciate it and it will help them. But I do not think it is ever advisable to talk to very large groups.

However, whether or not you talk to your men, it is still your job to fit yourself to give advice and help to any of them who need it, and that's a responsibility you must shoulder. I am perfectly certain that sex morals and morale are too closely linked for any good officer to leave the whole subject to take care of itself.

See the whole problem widely, and remember that the good or bad behaviour of your men has repercussions on civilian as well as army morale, and that both are vital to the war effort.

vii. *Money matters*

As officers we all know what a headache it all is, first, trying to understand the regulations about pay, then trying to unravel the regimental paymaster's decisions, and, finally, and far the worst of all, trying to explain the whole business to the soldier.

It often seems an almost impossible task, particularly the last, and certainly some soldiers will never understand, and never be convinced, that they are not being "done down" by somebody. But the effort has got to be made, and if the man understands that you are ready to give up your time to his money problems, and do your best for him and his family, he will be grateful even if he does not understand your explanation, and even if he thinks you are quite wrong !

Pay grievances and pay worries are very real to many men, and one cannot, therefore, give too much time to trying to remove them, and they must not be left entirely to the pay serjeant to settle. You must personally see that the pay serjeant gives the men a proper chance to see their accounts and ask about them, as they are entitled to do.

Two other points about accounts :—

(a) *Publish regular balance sheets*

Always publish regular balance sheets of any little accounts such as **company games funds, etc.** ; some men are, I fear, terribly suspicious

about the honesty of their officers and their pay serjeants, and the publication of balance sheets, even if they do not understand them, does help to allay their suspicions a little.

(b) *Explain subscriptions and stoppages*

Explain carefully to the men how their various subscriptions and stoppages are spent, so that again they may have no unnecessary grievance on these points. I think this is all done far better now than it was, but in the early days of the war there were a great many unnecessary misunderstandings.

Grievances about wages of munition workers

Lastly, on the subject of pay grievances, there is the burning question of the difference between the soldier's and civilian's pay.

Believing, as I do, that men who have grievances, however well cherished and however just they may appear to be, will never be such good soldiers as those without them, I think it is your duty to try to remove this particular grievance from your men's minds.

I am certain it is worth having a shot at, though I know that it is neither an easy, nor a popular task. How will you do it? Not, I am sure, by trying to prove to the men that they are really quite well off if only they will remember to reckon as part of their pay all the things in kind, like board, lodging, clothing, etc., which the benevolent army gives them free. However true in a way such statements may be, you will never succeed in getting them across, so I don't advise you to try; you will only irritate your audience and lose their sympathy.

Nor do I think that you will be any more successful in convincing them that many of the stories about workers' wages are exaggerated or exceptional, as they often are. There will always be some men present who will confound you with detailed accounts of what their young cousin, or their wife's brother is earning, and you will lose your case in the men's judgment, which is all that matters.

And it is important to remember, when speaking to them, that many of them are far more concerned about the allowances for their families than about their own pay.

No! It is far wiser for the officer to admit frankly that in the matter of pay the average civilian is a lot better off than the average soldier, and then to try and remove the grievance in a more honest way.

I would tackle the matter with the men something like this: "You men spend a lot of your time envying the civilian and wishing you were back in civvy street with a lot of money in your pocket; but I wonder if you are as right as you think you are. True, the civilian has many advantages over you; he can live at home, if he has not been bombed out and his family evacuated, of course; he has factory discipline, instead of army discipline, except for his Home Guard service which takes up most of his spare time if he is not fire-watching; and he has very good pay, although there are not many things to spend it on except Savings Certificates. And, best of all, he has got no equipment to blanco, or brasses to clean!

"What can you in the army put against all those good things? A hard, healthy life, with the prospect of being wounded or killed before long; for many of you adventure and a chance of seeing the world; good comradeship, with a few shillings a week pocket money, and, I am afraid, long spells of boredom, with army discipline to make it worse. Does not sound too good, does it, and, of course, it is not by your old civilian standards. And yet, now that you have got used to army life, I wonder if you would really enjoy civilian life, if you went back to it to-morrow, quite as much as you think you would.

“Long hours in an office or factory, and day after day, month after month of that, mind you, with no letting up except for one week’s holiday a year, would not be too pleasant, would it, after the healthy open-air life you have led? You would miss, too, most of you, the good comradeship of the army more than perhaps you now realize.

“But far more important than those two things is the knowledge you now have that you are doing a hard and difficult job of work—and that with no high pay as a reward or bribe you are ready and trained to give your life for others when you are called upon to do so. That knowledge, of which your uniform is the witness, is something which many civilians in reserved occupations would give all their high pay and other privileges to be able to possess, though they may not say so, and may not in many cases fully realize the fact. And I am perfectly certain that, though you may be short of cash both now and in the future, and probably will be, you will always think with pride of the days when you wore battle-dress, and unfortunate stay-at-home civilians will have to keep very quiet and stand you drinks with their overtime money when you tell the tale of your war activities in the local pub. You will be able to exaggerate as much as you like, too, because they will not know, and will not like to say they do not!

“I do not mean by that that the civilian worker is not doing a good job for the country, because, of course, in most instances he is—a very good and vital job—but I do mean that there is really no need at all for you fellows to get bitter envying him and his pay. In many ways it is obvious that he is damned lucky, but in the end you will have something he can never have, so really if you look at the thing honestly you are one up on him, and he is the man to be bitter, not you! So cheer up and hold your heads high!”

Perhaps your men will smile at that talk, and look cynical, but I don’t think you will have wasted your words. Their cynicism is largely on the surface; they will know in their hearts that they really are rather proud of themselves as soldiers, and that there is a lot more in what you’ve said to them than they would care to admit. They will, probably, continue to air the grievance, but you will have removed much of its sting and so have rendered it much less harmful.

viii. *Services air raid enquiry scheme*

The Services Air Raid Enquiry Scheme has been organized to relieve men’s anxiety after a heavy air raid, and to see that they get the right compensation for damage, and so on. Every officer should make sure that he understands how it works. Read Part III of “The Soldier’s Welfare” carefully.

ix. *Overseas enquiry scheme*

This has been set up by the War Office to deal with enquiries from overseas, and is run by the Soldiers’, Sailors’, and Airmen’s Families Association. Briefly it works out as follows:—

Men who are anxious about their families at home, either because they have not heard for a long time or because they have heard that things are going wrong, can write or cable to the Overseas Enquiry Branch of the Soldiers’, Sailors’, and Airmen’s Families Association at 2, Caxton Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1. Their enquiries are investigated by the local secretaries of the S.S.A.F.A., and a cabled report goes back to the enquirer telling him the position. This is followed by an airgraph or air mail letter giving a more detailed statement.

This overseas office deals with about a thousand enquiries a month now, so you see it is well used." Before you or your men go overseas, make sure that they and their families know about it. The knowledge that the scheme exists will help to relieve a lot of anxiety in advance. Men should be advised to make their enquiries through their officers.

x. *Keep friends together*

So far as is humanly possible, keep men who are pals together. As you know, having a good half section, or a good mate, means a great deal to a soldier; yet again and again one hears of instances of men who have been together for a long time and have become real friends, being separated for no other reason than the whim of a serjeant-major, or of an orderly room clerk who likes to have nominal rolls in alphabetical order. Separating pals unnecessarily is one of those unnecessary hardships which men quite rightly resent and grouse about, so it deserves very careful attention at all times.

xi. *Group men carefully*

I think, too, that you should pay attention to the importance of grouping men together, so far as possible, who come from the same locality, or who have the same kind of educational standards. Rightly or wrongly, most men do prefer to be with their own kind, and it is only very natural that they should do so. A few types like the Cockney are always good mixers; but they are, I think, rather an exception, and certainly the Welsh, and some of the north country types, are very rarely at their happiest when mixed up with "foreigners." It is, too, exceptional for an uneducated man to feel really happy and at ease in the company of those better educated than himself, and *vice versa*.

It is the officer's job to appreciate these differences and difficulties, and to put each man where he will be best able to give of his best; and that is usually where he is happiest and most at ease.

On the other hand, men have got, I would agree, to learn to be "good mixers," and very often the mixing up of different types is all to the good in many ways. It's not a matter for rules, and I have referred to it in order that you may appreciate the pros and cons of the matter, and not just group your men anyhow, without bothering, or alphabetically. How you do it matters a lot to them.

Conclusion

Time's up, and there are any amount of points about sport, education, and so on, that I have not been able to refer to.

Looking after your men's welfare is, you will realize, a big job. No time for the officer to get bored or browned off, or even think of his own troubles—which is all to the good.

But, if you tackle the problem in the right spirit, you will, I know, find that not only is the work full of real human interest, but that the doing of it has helped you to establish that relationship between yourself and your men which was the subject of my first talk.

In this and in many other ways, the officer who looks after his men's welfare reaps the reward of his efforts.

Summing up

I trust that what I have said to you in these three talks will be of some help to you in your command of men. Never forget for a minute that the

men in the ranks are the salt of the earth, that they deserve the best possible leadership, and that it is your privilege, as well as your great responsibility, to have the honour of commanding them. Every officer must try his utmost to be worthy of that honour and responsibility.

I hope that when, as comrades in arms, you have won this war together, you will return and work together in the same spirit of comradeship at the task of building the better world for which we are now fighting.

